

מנקודת ראות ירושלמית

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The Work of Robert L. Lindsey

**A New Solution to the
Synoptic Problem**

David Bivin

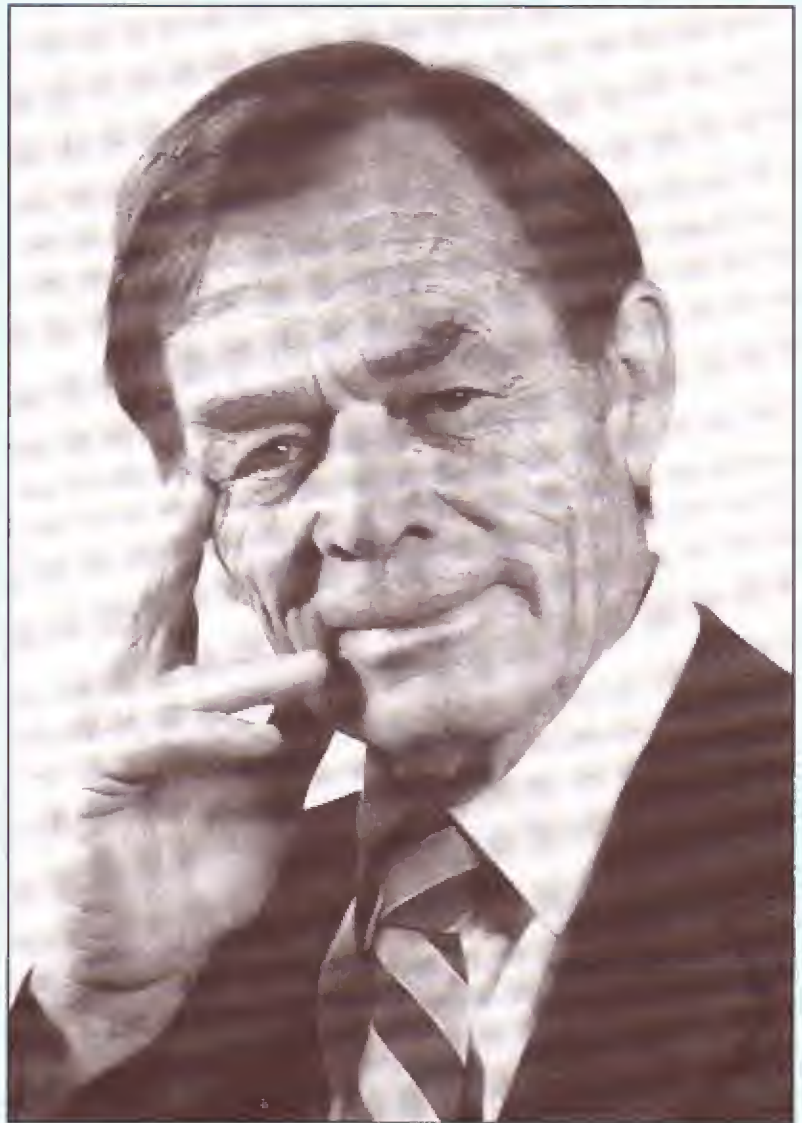
**Unearthing Literary
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Exploring the Hebraic Background to the Words of Jesus

Perspective on Robert Lindsey



Dr. Lindsey at work in his Tiberias study in 1960.

Dr. Robert L. Lindsey was born in Norman, Oklahoma in 1917. He earned a B.A. degree in Classical Greek at the University of Oklahoma, and concentrated in classical languages and biblical studies during his graduate career at Princeton School of Divinity and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lindsey first came to Israel in 1939, spending fifteen months acquainting himself with the country and people, and refining his knowledge of Hebrew. He returned to Israel to serve as pastor of the Narkis Street Baptist Congregation in Jerusalem from 1945–1952. After completing his doctorate in the United States in 1954, he resumed his work with the church in Israel, eventually coming back to the Baptist congregation in Jerusalem where he served until 1986.

This issue of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is devoted to the work of Dr. Lindsey whose discoveries became the foundation of a new school of New Testament thought — the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Although his work challenges many of the conclusions of the past 200 years of New Testament scholarship, his research has not been widely published. Recent-

ly, however, he has produced a number of significant volumes, and we are using this issue of *JP* to bring these publications to the attention of our readers, and to highlight Lindsey's contribution to the field of synoptic studies.

In "A New Solution to the Synoptic Problem," David Bivin presents an overview of various attempts to solve the synoptic problem, focusing on a summary of Lindsey's own solution.

One outgrowth of Lindsey's research has been a unique concordance of the synoptic Gospels. In "Unearthing Literary Strata," Steven Notley explains the significance of this concordance and provides examples of its usefulness.

Wycliffe Bible translator Randall Buth takes a professional interest in synoptic research as it affects Bible translation. In addition to reviewing Lindsey's recently published *Jesus Rabbi & Lord*, Buth critically examines a particular passage in Matthew which Lindsey translates in a non-traditional way.

Joseph Frankovic concludes this JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE with his review of *The Jesus Sources*, a collection of lectures Lindsey delivered concerning the relationship of the synoptic Gospels.

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Cover photo:
Robert L. Lindsey.
(Photo: Kurt Ben-Joseph)

A New Solution to the Synoptic Problem

by David Bivin

The word “synoptic” is derived from *συνόψεσθαι* (*synopsesthai*), a Greek word meaning to view together. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the synoptic Gospels because they present a similar view of the same series of events — the deeds and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth.

These books date from the first century A.D. and were composed in Greek, although the syntax and vocabulary of the texts suggest that the material originally existed in written form in either Hebrew or Aramaic. To date, scholars have collated more than 1000 Greek manuscripts containing portions of one or more of the synoptic Gospels.

None of the synoptic Gospels gives the name of its author. The attribution of authorship to Matthew, Mark and Luke is a Christian tradition dating to the late second century A.D. The first Gospel may have been ascribed to Matthew because of the tradition that the disciple Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew which was translated to Greek. For example, Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor during the mid-second century A.D., wrote that “Matthew put down the words of the Lord in the Hebrew language, and others have translated them, each as best he could” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III 39, 16).

The Problem

The “synoptic problem” concerns the order in which Matthew, Mark and Luke were written, and the literary sources they may have used.¹ Although the many similarities among the synoptic Gospels suggest an interdependence, there are also differences.

According to Luke 4:22, after Jesus spoke in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth the

people said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” According to Mark 6:3 they said, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary...?” However, Matthew 13:55 recounts, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary?”

Jesus’ foretelling of Peter’s denial appears in all three Gospels (Mt. 26:34, Mk. 14:30, Lk. 22:34). In Matthew and Luke, Jesus says that Peter will deny him three

times before the cock crows, whereas according to Mark, Jesus says that Peter will deny him three times before the cock crows twice.

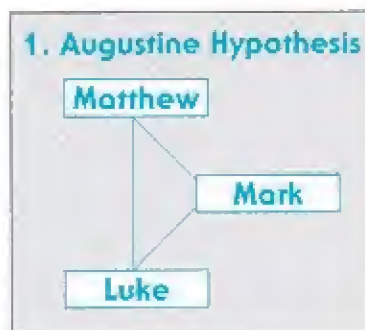
In a saying that appears only in Matthew and Luke, Jesus says, “What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?”

(Mt. 7:9–10); “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a snake; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?” (Lk. 11:11–12).

For the past 200 years, scholars have been trying to determine the significance of such similarities and differences. It appears that the writers of the synoptic Gospels borrowed from each other, or shared common sources, or both. But it is not always clear who borrowed from whom and which variants are the most original.

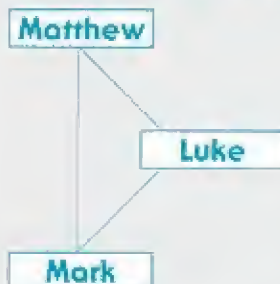
Solutions to the Problem

The earliest known theory of the synoptic relationship was proposed in *De Consensu Evangelistarum I* by Augustine, bishop of Hippo from 396–430 A.D. Augustine held that the synoptic Gospels were written in the same order in which they appear in the New Testament, with Mark using Matthew’s account, and Luke referring to Matthew and Mark. This view, which is accepted by the Roman Catholic church, held sway until about 1790, and has been revived by B.C. Butler.² (See diagram 1.)



David Bivin was one of Dr. Lindsey's first students in Jerusalem, arriving in Israel in 1963 only a short time after Lindsey's fundamental synoptic discoveries.

2. Griesbach Hypothesis



The oldest modern theory is that Matthew was the first Gospel written and was used by Luke, with Mark writing last and copying from both Matthew and Luke. This was first proposed in 1764 by Henry Owen, but has been called the Griesbach Hypothesis because it was advocated by Johann J. Griesbach in 1789. It was the dominant theory among scholars from about 1790 to 1870, and has

been brought into currency again by William R. Farmer.³ (See diagram 2.)

The most widely accepted synoptic theory today is the Two-Document Hypothesis which was proposed by Heinrich J. Holtzmann in 1863 and given its classic statement in 1924 by Burnett Hillman Streeter in *The Four Gospels*. According to this theory, Mark wrote first and was used independently by Matthew and Luke. In addition to Mark's document, Matthew and Luke also worked from a non-canonical document consisting mostly of sayings of Jesus. This second source is a hypothetical text referred to by scholars as "Q," thought to be an abbreviation of the German word *Quelle*, meaning source. (See diagram 3.)

In 1922 William Lockton suggested a theory of Lukan priority. According to his hypothesis Luke was written first, copied by Mark, who was in turn copied by Matthew who copied from Luke as well.⁴

**Robert Lindsey,
David Flusser,
David Bivin and
Shmuel Safrai.**
(Photo: David Harris)

Forty years later Robert L. Lindsey independently reached a similar solution to the synoptic problem. He proposed a theory of Lukan priority which argues that Luke was written first and was used by Mark, who in turn was used by Matthew who did not know Luke's Gospel.⁵ This theory postulates two non-canonical documents that were unknown to the synoptists — a Hebrew biography of Jesus and a literal Greek translation of that original — and two other non-canonical sources known to one or more of the writers.

3. Two-Document Hypothesis



According to Lindsey, Matthew and Luke, and perhaps Mark as well, were acquainted with an anthology of Jesus' words and deeds taken from the Greek translation of the Hebrew biography. Luke alone was acquainted with a second source, a Greek biography which attempted to reconstruct the story order of the original Hebrew text and its Greek translation. Mark used Luke while only rarely if at all referring to the anthology, while Matthew

used Mark and the anthology. Luke and Matthew did not know each other's Gospels, but independently used the anthology. As in the more popular Two-Document Hypothesis, Mark is the middle term between Matthew and Luke. (See diagram 4.)

Importance of Hebrew

Lindsey arrived at his theory unintentionally. Attempting to replace an outdated Hebrew translation of the New Testament, he began by translating the Gospel of Mark, assuming it to be the earliest of the synoptic Gospels. Although Mark's text is relatively Semitic, it contains hundreds



4. Lindsey Synoptic Hypothesis

Hebrew Diagraphy

Greek Translation

Anthology

First Reconstruction

Luke

Mark

Matthew

Lindsey's research not only emphasizes the priority of Luke and/or Matthew when using their shared source, it draws particular attention to the Hebraic nature of the Greek text of the synoptic Gospels and to the importance of translating that text into Hebrew before evaluating it. The recognition of the importance of Hebrew in understanding the Gospels is a new contribution to grappling with the synoptic problem, and is a harbinger of much fruitful research for the future. JP

of non-Sem- itisms, such as the oft-repeated "and immediately," which are not present in Lukan parallels. This suggested to Lindsey the possibility that Mark was copying Luke and not vice versa; with further research this resulted in his solution to the synoptic problem.

A number of scholars in Israel, most prominently Hebrew University's Prof. David Flusser, have espoused Lindsey's source theory.⁶ These scholars, now collaborating as the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, believe that a Hebrew *vorlage* lies behind the Greek texts of the Gospels. They maintain that by translating the Greek texts back into Hebrew and interpreting how this Hebrew text would have been understood by first-century readers, one gains a fuller understanding of the text's original meaning.

In their emphasis on the importance of Hebrew, the Jerusalem School scholars are following the pioneering work of Hebrew University professor M.H. Segal, who suggested as early as 1909 that Mishnaic Hebrew showed the characteristics of a living language, and that the Jewish people in the land of Israel at the time of Jesus used Hebrew as their primary spoken and written language.⁷ Segal's conclusions have been confirmed by the discovery of the Bar Kochva letters and other documents from the Dead Sea area. The most recent contribution to this subject is the two-part article by Hebrew University professor Shmuel Safrai, "Spoken Languages in the Time of Jesus," JP 4.1 (1991), 3-8, 13, and "Literary Languages in the Time of Jesus," JP 4.2 (1991), 3-8.

1. Recent introductions to the synoptic problem are E.P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London and Philadelphia, 1989); Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1987). See also the introduction to the synoptic problem in

Brad H. Young, *Jesus and His Jewish Parables* (New York, 1989), pp. 129-163.

2. B.C. Butler, *The Originality of St. Matthew: A Critique of the Two-Document Hypothesis* (Cambridge, 1951).

3. William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (New York, 1964).

4. William Lockton, "The Origin of the Gospels," *Church Quarterly Review* 94 (1922), 216-239. Lockton subsequently wrote three books to substantiate his theory, all published by Longmans, Green and Co. of London: *The Resurrection and Other Gospel Narratives and The Narratives of the Virgin Birth* (1924), *The Three Traditions in the Gospels* (1926), and *Certain Alleged Gospel Sources: A Study of Q, Proto-Luke and M* (1927).

5. Robert L. Lindsey, "A Modified Two-Document Theory of the Synoptic Dependence and Interdependence," *Novum Testamentum* 6 (1963), 239-263.

6. David Flusser, "Jesus," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), 10:10.

7. M.H. Segal, "Mishnaic Hebrew and Its Relation to Biblical Hebrew and to Aramaic," in *Jewish Quarterly Review Old Series* 20 (1908-9), 647-737. See also Segal's *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1927).

Unearthing Literary Strata



Steven Notley, a member of the Jerusalem School, is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Religions at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

by R. Steven Notley

A good teacher not only conveys knowledge but gives his students the tools by which they may continue learning. With the publication of the third and final volume of *A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels*, Dr. Robert Lindsey has given to the scholars who have been following his work, as well as to future scholarship, a necessary tool for the study of the synoptic Gospels.

The concordance is laid out in such a way that the vitally important data which Lindsey long ago saw embedded in the literary strata will be more easily seen by others. The verse-by-verse comparison offers building blocks for grasping the literary relationship of the synoptic Gospels, and more clearly understanding the life and teachings of Jesus.

Parallel References

Anyone who has studied the synoptic Gospels will quickly realize the valuable contribution this new concordance makes to comparative Gospel research. Most New Testament concordances list entries in order of their appearance, which makes it quite difficult to determine whether a word in the synoptic Gospels is used in parallel pericopae, omitted or substituted by another word. With Lindsey's concordance, the student can immediately see the answer to these questions.

Let us take as an example the noun εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*, Gospel). An ordinary Greek New Testament concordance would list the four occurrences of *euangelion* in Matthew before the word's first occurrence in Mark, but Lindsey's synoptic concordance lists the first occurrence of *euangelion* as Mark 1:1 since that is the first occurrence of the word in a synopsis. The concordance indicates by indentation and solid line that there is no parallel to *euangelion* in this pericope, however there is a general parallel (paragraph or pericope in length) in both Matthew and Luke (an English translation is provided for the convenience of our readers):

Mk 1:1 Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Mt (—)

Lk (—)

Mk 1:1 The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Mt (—)

Lk (—)

Another reference to *euangelion*, in Matthew 26:13, is also absent in the Lukan parallel but is found in the Markan parallel. This reference and its parallels are presented in the Lindsey concordance in the following manner:

Mt 26:13 ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο

Mk 14:9 ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

Lk (—)

Mt 26:13 wherever this gospel is preached

Mk 14:9 wherever the gospel is preached

Lk (—)

Because both Matthew and Mark employ the word *euangelion*, their references appear in the concordance without indentation. Luke has a general parallel to the Matthean-Markan context in his very similar story (Lk. 7:36-50), and so the Lukan reference is indented and shown with a solid line.

Another of the eleven synoptic contexts in which *euangelion* appears is found in Matthew 4:23:

Mt 4:23 διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας

Mk 1:39 κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν εἰς ὅλην

Lk 4:44 ἦν κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς

Mt 4:23 teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom

Mk 1:39 preaching in their synagogues in all

Lk 4:44 he was preaching in the synagogues

Here indentation of the Markan and Lukan references indicates that these are phrase- or sentence-length parallels to Matthew, but that Mark and Luke lack the word *euangelion*. As with other entries, the reader here is able immediately to see whether one of the synoptists has replaced a word with a substitute, and whether there is a pattern of substitution.

Markan Pickups

One of Lindsey's purposes in producing the concordance was to help others see the phenomenon he calls "Markan pickups." Lindsey discovered that Mark replaces words and phrases in Lukan parallels with synonyms that are borrowed from other contexts in Luke. For instance, Mark picks up *στέγη* (*stegē*, roof) from Luke 7:6 in the story of the centurion's servant and uses it as a replacement in Mark 2:4 for Luke's *δομα* (*dōma*, roof) in the story of the healing of the paralytic (Lk. 5:17–26).

Although Mark's method may seem inane to the western mind, for students of Jewish literature Mark's style is very familiar. His Gospel resembles the work of contemporary Jewish commentaries (*midrashim* and *targumim*). Lindsey's concordance helps a student to observe this kind of replacement more easily, and thus to see that Mark is using Luke and not vice versa. In an ordinary concordance of the Greek New Testament, this kind of synonymic replacement is difficult to trace.

The Problem of Agreements

Another important contribution which should not be overlooked is Lindsey's introduction to the concordance. Most JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE readers are already aware of Lindsey's pioneering work in identifying linguistic traces of a pre-synoptic Hebrew life of Jesus. The process and result of his discovery were published in *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (1973) and elsewhere in scholarly and popular formats, yet in no place is his insight into the synoptic relationship presented in such a clear and convincing manner as in his introduction to this concordance.

Lindsey outlines the inability of the theory of Markan priority, held by most scholars, to explain the data found in the synoptic Gospels. For example, Lindsey cites Matthew and Luke's mutual inclusion of "lengthy additions" to Mark's version of the temptation of Jesus (Mk. 1:12, 13; Mt.

4:1–11; Lk. 4:1–13), as well as to Mark's account of the Baptist's preaching (Mk. 1:7–8; Mt. 3:7–10; Lk. 3:7–9). If, as most scholars think, Matthew and Luke are unaware of each other's composition, then these common "additions" suggest that they have a source other than Mark at these points.

An even more poignant example of Matthean–Lukan "additions" opposite Mark is found in the Beelzebul controversy (see box).

Matthew 12:27–30

And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Mark 3:27

But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house.

Luke 11:19–23

And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come upon you.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil.

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Lindsey points out another difficulty for Markan priorists: in Double Tradition, Matthew and Luke are able faithfully to reproduce material from their common non-Markan "sayings source" (which scholars have termed "Q"), but are unable to do so in Triple Tradition. Notice, for instance, the high degree of verbal identity between Matthew and Luke in the passage above when Mark is not present, but the low degree of identity when he is. Matthew consistently follows Mark more closely in Triple Tradition, while Luke demonstrates a distinct independence.

These facts, together with Mark's influence on the ordering of the synoptic material, led Lindsey to conclude that Mark held the middle position in the synoptic tradition (see Lindsey's "The Markan Cross-Factor," *JP*, September/October 1989).

Minor Agreements

The challenge presented to Markan priority by the Matthean–Lukan agreements against Mark has been recognized since the time of B.H. Streeter (*The Four Gospels*, 1924). Streeter reasoned that the “lengthy additions” were overlaps of Mark and Q material, and that where Matthew and Luke independently agree against Mark in making these additions, they are drawing from Q.

If the agreements were limited to the eight pericopae identified by Streeter, then the difficulty for the proponents of Markan priority would be minimal. However, many Matthean–Lukan agreements against Mark occur which involve only slight details — the addition or omission of a word, the replacement of a word with a synonym, a change of word order, use of the singular rather than plural form of a noun. In his introduction Lindsey gives examples of such agreements (see box):

Matthew 8:27

And the men *marveled*, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea *obey* [plural form of the verb] him?”

Mark 4:41

And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea *obey* [singular form of the verb] him?”

Luke 8:25

And they were afraid, and they *marveled*, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they *obey* [plural form of the verb] him?”

Agreements of this sort were considered by Streeter, Bultmann and others to be the result of pure chance and scribal harmonization. In an attempt to minimize their importance, they called them “minor agreements,” and one receives the feeling from Streeter and Bultmann’s evaluation that these agreements are rare accidents in the literary development of the synoptic Gospels. However, Frans Neirynck has catalogued 1005 instances of “minor agreements” involving over 4000 words (*The Minor Agreements of Matthew and Luke Against Mark*, 1974, pp. 55–195). The sheer number of the “minor agreements” challenges the credibility of Streeter and Bultmann’s explanation.

The implications of “minor agreements” are significant for those embracing Markan priority and the “two-source” hypothesis. These two pillars of modern synoptic criticism rest upon the assumption that Matthew and Luke independently used

Mark and Q. If, however, Matthew knew Luke’s Gospel, or a source on which Luke is based, as well as Mark, then the need for Q to explain non-Markan material would be eliminated. “Further, the priority of Mark itself is threatened, since it is no longer needed as the narrative source which Matthew and Luke combined with Q to produce their Gospels” (E.P. Sanders, “The Overlaps of Mark and Q and the Synoptic Problem,” *New Testament Studies* 19 [1973], 454).

Sanders has demonstrated that not all of what Streeter identified as Markan overlaps conforms to Streeter’s own limiting criteria. Conversely, other Markan overlaps are ignored by Streeter. To follow Streeter’s method of identifying Matthean–Lukan agreements as Markan–Q overlaps will produce surprising results: “If Q were made responsible for all these agreements in addition to the traditional Q material, it would be very much like Matthew. To expand the theory of Markan–Q overlaps

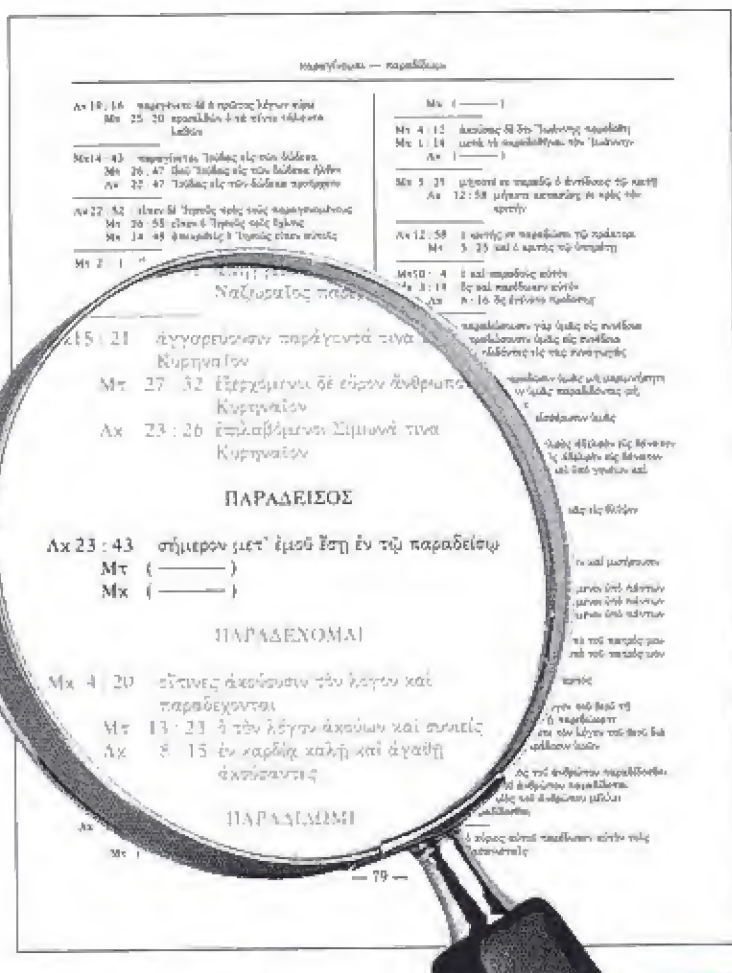
much beyond Streeter’s bounds is simply to deny the two-source hypothesis” (“Overlaps,” p. 455).

The extent of Q in Streeter’s theory is widened beyond the simple “sayings source” to include narrative material. We may rightly ask with Sanders what compels us to limit

Markan–Q overlaps to those instances where Matthew and Luke are in agreement. Streeter explains the differences between Mark and Luke concerning “The Rejection in Nazareth” as a result of an overlap between Mark and L (Luke’s special source). The effect is that Q tends to look more like a “Proto-Gospel” than a simple non-Markan “sayings source.” Such a source removes the necessity for Q and Mark as the primary sources for Matthew and Luke.

Conclusions

Any project of this size must necessarily have its limitations. Lindsey has chosen as his Greek text for the concordance the ninth edition of Albert Huck’s *Synopsis of the First Three Gospels*, now out of print. Students may find it a bit disconcerting that texts from Kurt Aland’s *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (13th edition, 1985) on rare occasions are not to be found in Lindsey’s concordance, however at points Huck has



agrees with the setting already depicted in verse 29. The inclusion of "sinners" in some manuscripts results from the tendency to harmonize Gospel texts.

A more important reading is Codex Bezae's "shorter version" of Luke 22:19-20: "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body.'" Many scholars agree that Codex Bezae preserves the better reading here, and that other manuscripts attempt to harmonize Luke with Mark and Matthew by including an extended portion from I Corinthians 11.

A *Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels* makes a significant contribution to Gospel scholarship. It is laid out in a clear and easily accessible manner, and any student of the synoptic Gospels will find it a valuable contribution to his or her library. **JP**

Page 79 of Volume Three of A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels, reduced to 45% of actual size, highlighting the entry παράδεισος (paradeisos, paradise).

selected a better reading than Aland.

The most stark contrast is Huck's choice of the reading: "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (Lk. 3:23). Aland has chosen the reading of manuscripts that have been harmonized with Mark and Matthew: "You are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased." The second reading no doubt is a result of the Church's struggle against adoptionist tendencies, eliminating any suggestion that it was only at his baptism that Jesus was "begotten" or adopted as God's son. The ancient Church's theological position notwithstanding, the text presented in Huck's synopsis, displaying a clear hint at the messianic Psalm 2:7, is to be preferred.

It is hoped that any future editions of the concordance will include significant textual variants. Of particular importance are some readings found in Codex Bezae. This ancient codex often provides the key to unlocking linguistic and historical problems. Note the omission in Codex Bezae of ἁμαρτωλοί (hamartōloi, sinners) in Luke 5:30, where Jesus and his disciples are accused of eating with tax collectors. The Bezae reading

A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels (3 volumes, 1985-1989, 1082 pp.) can be ordered from Dugith Publishers. Note that a knowledge of Greek is required to use this concordance. The price of the three hardcover volumes is US\$195.00 (£120.00) or equivalent in other currencies, including postage from Israel by surface mail — allow 7-10 weeks for delivery. Orders should be mailed to Dugith Publishers, P.O. Box 154, 91000 Jerusalem, Israel, with checks made out to "Dugith."

Robert Lindsey speaking at a meeting of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research in May, 1985. (Photo: Kurt Ben-Joseph)





David Flusser and
Robert Lindsey,
doyens of the
Jerusalem
School.

According to Prof. Flusser...

Prof. David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has long espoused Lindsey's synoptic theory. Flusser's research on the synoptic Gospels is based on Lukan priority, and he teaches his students "Lindsian" theory.

Here are some of Flusser's remarks from his published works about Lindsey's contribution to synoptic studies:

"Lindsey's approach, therefore, opens a window that allows us to get closer to the original version of the life and sayings of Jesus."

הדת וסקירות הנצרות
[*Judaism and the Sources of Christianity*]
(Tel Aviv, 1979), p. 31.

▲▲▲

"...It seems clear that Lindsey's observations have provided a decisive new clue to the understanding of the Synoptic relationships and an equally important clue to the right approach to the Gospel of Mark.

"...The advantage of Lindsey's theory is that it accepts the view that back of our extant

Gospels lie two main sources and that a pattern of interdependence between our actual Synoptic works exists as well. This delineation of sources has, as far as I know, never been proposed."

From the foreword to Lindsey's
A Hebrew Translation of the Gospels of Mark
(Jerusalem, 1973), p. 1.

▲▲▲

"Without a serious literary analysis of the first three Gospels it is impossible to know what was probably written in the ancient Christian sources which are behind them.... I accept the [synoptic] theory of Robert Lindsey...it is important that Lindsey has shown that the Synoptic Gospels are based upon an old account which was known both to Matthew and Luke, and that Mark has completely rewritten his sources. Another point of Lindsey's theory is that Matthew used both the old account and Mark."

From "A Literary Approach to the Trial of Jesus"
in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*
(Jerusalem, 1988), p. 588.

Pursuing Righteousness

by Randall Buth

A person can't translate what he doesn't understand, and sometimes he can't translate what he understands even if he has words for it in his target language. Discovering the meaning of a passage to be translated can take a Gospel student through some very exotic fields.

An interesting problem arose while I was reading and enjoying Robert Lindsey's book, *Jesus Rabbi & Lord* (see book review on page 13 of this issue). Traditionally, the beatitude found in Matthew 5:10 is read as "blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Dr. Lindsey would read this as "blest are the righteousness-driven," that is, those with a passion for righteousness. Lindsey cites a possible Hebrew antecedent, נִרְדֵּף צְדִיקָה (*nir-de-FE tse-da-KAH*), to justify the metaphorical and active-voice interpretation of "pursued, persecuted" (p. 111).

This presents a reader with several problems or riddles. There are a number of unstated intervening steps that an exegete must work through before he is able to evaluate Lindsey's interpretation as a translation option, or before he can evaluate its historical probability.

Passive or Active?

First of all, the Greek οἱ δεδιωγμένοι (*hoi dediōgmenoi*) could be either reflexive ("those pursuing/persecuting [for themselves]") or passive ("those pursued/persecuted"), but normally would be read as passive because of the preposition ἐνεκεν (*heneken*, because of) which follows.¹ It therefore would seem that an active-voice translation of the Matthean text is improbable.

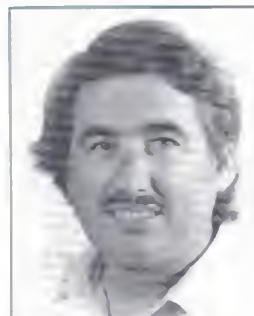
On the other hand, Lindsey's suggested Hebrew reconstruction of this passage can explain the passive form of the Greek. Lindsey proposes נִרְדֵּף (*nir-de-FE*), a participle from the root *r-d-f* of the *nif'al* verb form. Though it can have an idiomatic active meaning, the *nif'al* verb form is usually passive and might woodenly be

translated as passive, thus explaining the Greek passive participle. Because of the popular nature of his book, Lindsey does not give or develop such philological background for his reconstruction. This hides some problems, both for the translator and the Bible scholar.

In order to get to the bottom of *nir-de-FE tse-da-KAH* (those pursuing righteousness, or those pursued [of] righteousness), a translator or exegete must start digging in some obscure linguistic soils. Biblical Hebrew and the Dead Sea Scrolls do not attest the idiom *nir-de-FE tse-da-KAH*, and there is no example of the *nif'al* form of the root *r-d-f* as an active verb. To my knowledge, the first support for the passive "pursued" as an active idiom is found in the Tosefta (compiled c. 230 A.D.): שְׁהָיָה רְדִיפָה לֵלֶךְ (*she-ha-ye-TAH re-du-FAH le-LEK*, who was "pursued" to go, i.e., who was anxious and determined to go) (Yevamot 6:6). In this context, which refers to an unhappy bride who wants to return to her father's house, the idiomatically active רְדִיפָה (*re-du-FAH*, pursued; eager; anxious) is a passive participle of a different verb form, the *pa'al*,² though of the same root as Lindsey's suggested *nif'al*.³

There may be minor support for the *pa'al* passive participle from the nature of the Greek participle δεδιωγμένοι (*dediōgmenoi*). This is a perfect (= complete) passive participle, a form that actually is closer to the Hebrew *pa'al* passive participle than the *nif'al*. All things being equal, the *pa'al* passive participle is more complete than the *nif'al*, in the same way that "pursued" is more complete than "being pursued." There was a tendency in many early Christian Greek texts to use the present, or incomplete, participle διωκόμενοι (*diōkomenoi*, [being] persecuted).⁴ The perfect in Matthew lines up with a *pa'al* passive participle, the form of "pursue/ pursued" that we find in Mishnaic Hebrew texts.

Another example of the *pa'al* passive participle from the root *r-d-f* in the active sense is found in Rashi's commentary on the Bible (eleventh century A.D.) at Exodus 31:13: רְדִיפִין חֲרִיזִין בְּרִיזוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ (*re-du-FIN*



Randall Buth is a translator and consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Africa.

u-ze-ri-ZIN biz-ri-ZUT ha-me-la'-KAH, eager [pursued] and speedy in the speed of the work). The *nif'al* verb form from the root *r-d-f* in the active sense that Lindsey mentions is not attested until the late middle ages. Abravanel in the fifteenth century A.D. uses the idiom when commenting on I Kings 1:1: וְעַם הָיָה יָדָה הַמֶּלֶךְ פָּטְטָה אֹתָם (ve-*IM* he-YOT da-VID ha-ME-leh be-tiv 'O 'o-HEV ha-na-SHIM ve-nir-DAF 'a-HAR ha-mish-GAL, When King David was in his prime he loved women and was craving [lit., was persecuted] after coitus). Notice that this idiom uses the preposition אַחֲרֵי (*a-HAR*, after) with the participle נִרְדָּף (*nir-DAF*), something masked in the other examples because of an infinitive object ("to go") or because of being paired with another adjective ("speedy").

Another form of the passive/active idiom "persecuted" in the sense of "craving, having a strong desire for" is found in Sifre, an early Mishnaic Hebrew source compiled about 300 A.D.: וְאֵיל וְאֶחָד רָדִיפִין עַל הַחֹמֹת (ho-*IL* ve-*a-TEM* re-di-FIN 'al ha-zo-NOT 'af ha-MA-yin lo' yiv-de-KU et ne-she-KEM, Since you are obsessed with whores [lit., persecuted upon whores], even the water [of testing] will not distinguish your women) (Sifre Numbers 21, to 5:31). The word in question, רָדִיפִין (*re-di-FIN*), is a passive adjectival form from the root *r-d-f*.⁵

The form that Lindsey suggests is not the most probable for a first-century Hebrew speaker. Instead of נִרְדָּף צָדִיקָה (*nir-de-FE tse-da-KAH*), either רָדִיפִין עַל צָדִיקָה (*re-du-FIN 'al tse-da-KAH*) or perhaps רָדִיפִין עַל צָדִיקָה (*re-di-FIN 'al tse-da-KAH*) would be better.⁶

Good Sense

Nonetheless, "pursuing righteousness" rather than "persecuted because of righteousness" makes inherently good sense for the beatitude. The idiom in active form meaning "someone who pursues righteousness" was already used in Isaiah 51:1: "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD."⁷ This sense would fit the previous beatitudes better than the sense of persecution. The other beatitudes often quoted or alluded to a Scripture verse, and Lindsey's suggestion at Matthew 5:10 would add another biblical idiom.

Of course, persecution is definitely in view in Matthew 5:12. Lindsey suggests that verses 11–12 and maybe 13–16 were spoken by Jesus after the resurrection.

Support for separating verses 11–12 from verse 10 comes from the switch from "you" singular to "you" plural (p. 183). Also, a context of talking about persecution makes better sense closer to the crucifixion or right after it.⁸

Lindsey's proposal of "blessed are those who strive for righteousness" is intriguing. Elsewhere Lindsey has paraphrased Matthew 5:9–10 as, "How blest are those determined to see God's salvation for a lost world, for these are the people I call the Kingdom of God."⁹ That is, righteousness compels those who are members of Jesus' movement and they cannot rest until the whole world is redeemed.

Translation & History Can Differ

Although Lindsey's proposal may reflect the intent of what Jesus originally said, it is a reconstruction that can only be adopted by a theologian or a historian. A translator of Matthew must translate what Matthew wrote, and it is most probable that he intended a passive idiom.¹⁰

What Matthew wrote should still be considered true in a literary/theological sense. It is part of Jesus' teaching, as is proven by Matthew 5:12. The Gospel writers and their sources were free to stylize their accounts, as can be seen by comparing the chronology of the temptation accounts or the wordings of the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism. The traditional "persecuted because of righteousness" remains the best option for translators at Matthew 5:10. **JP**

1. The other New Testament examples of ἐνεκεν (because of) with a noun refer to a reason for an action, never to the desired goal of an action (i.e., not "to pursue after righteousness"): Mt. 5:11; 10:18, 39; 16:25; 19:29; Mk. 8:35; 10:7, 29; 13:9; Lk. 9:24; 10:29; 21:12; Acts 28:20; Rom. 14:20; (II Cor. 7:12, purpose clause with infinitive).

2. *Pa'al*, like *nif'al*, is one of the seven basic forms of the Hebrew verb.

3. Additionally, this example is not the reading of the best manuscript of the Tosefta, which uses מְרִדָּףָה (*te-ru-FAH*, distressed [wanting to leave]), instead of רָדִיפָה (*re-du-FAH*, pursued; eager; anxious [wanting to leave]).

4. See, for example, I Cor. 4:12, II Cor. 4:9, Gal. 5:11, and Polycarp to Philippi 2:3: μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ καὶ οἱ διωκόμενοι ἐνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, οὗτοι αὐτῶν ἔσται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Blessed are the poor and those [being] persecuted because of righteousness, for of them is the kingdom of God).

5. With a flick at the end of the first ' (*yod*), turning it into a *vav* (*vav*), this adjective would become the normal *pa'al* passive participle רָדִיפִין (*re-du-FIN*). In fact, many *yods* and *vavs* in the Dead Sea Scrolls are indistinguishable. Here, in either case, we have the passive-active idiom. Also notice that a preposition, עַל (*al*, on, upon), is

(continued on page 15)

Jesus Rabbi & Lord: The Hebrew Story of Jesus Behind Our Gospels

by Robert L. Lindsey. Oak Creek, Wisconsin: Cornerstone Publishing, 1990. 227 pp., \$10.95.

by Randall Buth

This is an unusual book, at once intriguing, illuminating, provocative, even frustrating. It is written in a popular style with no footnotes or lengthy academic discussions, and at times the book seems directed to anyone interested in the life of Jesus. However there is a sophistication in the analysis that requires an extensive technical background in order to evaluate or appreciate the suggestions.

The picture of Jesus should be attractive to an evangelical audience, though perhaps a little unnerving. Some readers may find it difficult to accept the literary analyses employed.

The book begins with personal glimpses into Dr. Lindsey's "pilgrimage" to the land of Israel and his life-long study of the synoptic Gospels. Lindsey's research led him to a friendship with Prof. David Flusser of Hebrew University.

The two of them, meeting regularly for many years, came to conclusions that chart a different path from most New Testament scholarship. They believe that there is a written Hebrew Gospel "buried" beneath the written Greek sources of the synoptic Gospels. Their methodology is to clear away Grecisms and interpret the material within a first-century cultural milieu.

Two distinct innovations have arisen, in addition to a Lukan priority model of synoptic relationships. One innovation is the suggestion that some of the isolated teachings, parables and stories still extant in the canonical Gospels were once connected in a pre-synoptic document. Lindsey suggests that there was a literary pattern of "incident-teaching-parable-parable." For example, he contends that the discourse on "worry" in Matthew 6:25-34 followed the incident with Martha in Luke 10:38-42, and was followed by the parables in Luke 12:16-21, "the rich fool," and Luke 16:19-31, "the rich man and Lazarus."

Lindsey mentions finding some twenty literary reconstructions of this sort (p. 80).

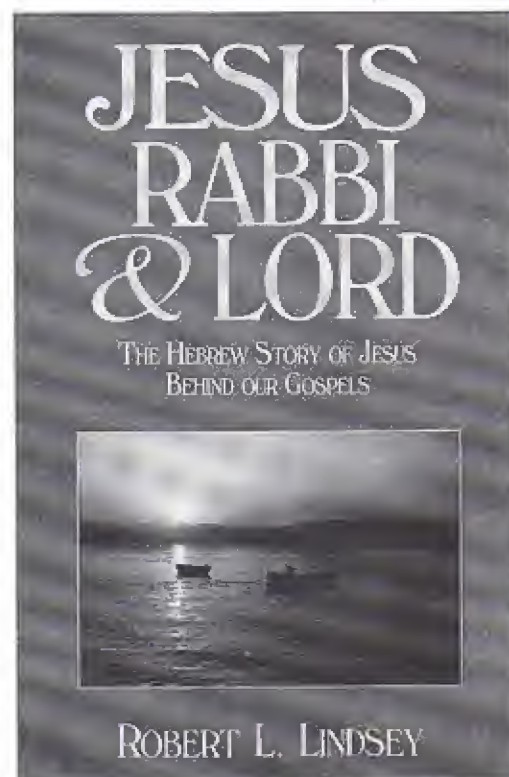
The second major methodological innovation is the claim that many of the sayings of Jesus scattered throughout the Gospels come from the period of forty days after the resurrection. A classic example for Lindsey is Luke 21:12-17 and Matthew 10:16-18. According to him, Luke has put these post-resurrection warnings of persecution in the midst of two different prophecies, while Matthew has placed them in the "sending out of the twelve."

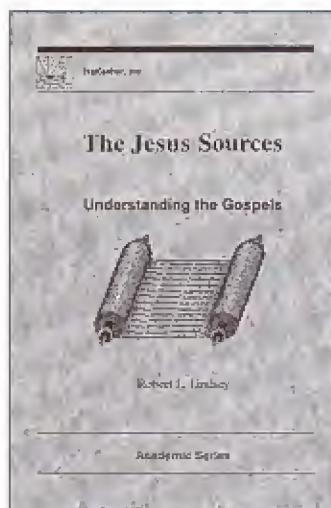
An example of the methodology in Lindsey's book, its potential usefulness and also its potential frustration for scholars, can be found in sections dealing with Matthew 5:10-12 (pp. 111-112, and 184). Lindsey explains "persecuted for the sake of righteousness" as having originally been "those with a zeal for righteousness." This is an interesting interpretation, but most of the intervening steps and evidence for the analysis are unstated. (See the accompanying article, "Pursuing Righteousness," on p. 11 for an elaboration of this.)

There are many unique proposals in the book which deserve serious consideration. It would be good, of course, if this material could also be written up for an academic audience. The scholarly community might enjoy hearing about "rabbinic-resurrection criticism" [my term] and the resultant view of Jesus as the divine Messiah-Rabbi. **JP**

Jesus Rabbi & Lord can be ordered from Cornerstone Publishing, P.O. Box 311, Oak Creek, WI 53154, U.S.A., for \$10.95 (plus \$2.50 postage and handling for U.S. residents, \$4.50 for non-U.S. residents).

Allow 7-10 weeks for delivery.





The Jesus Sources: Understanding the Gospels

by Robert L. Lindsey. Tulsa, Oklahoma: HaKeshet, 1990. 111 pp., \$6.95.

by Joseph G. Frankovic

In the winter of 1982–1983, Robert Lindsey delivered a series of lectures in Jerusalem. These lectures were recorded and transcribed by Walli Callaway, edited by James Burnham and published as *The Lindsey Lectures*. Lindsey reedited the lectures in the spring of 1990, adding new material, and they were published that summer as *The Jesus Sources*.

In this book Lindsey presents four keys to understanding the synoptic Gospels: 1) the influence of Hebrew on the Greek of the Gospels; 2) the interrelationship of Matthew, Mark and Luke; 3) the two sources of Luke; and 4) the restoration of longer story units which have been dislocated in transmission. Many passages are addressed and a wide variety of topics discussed to illustrate these keys and substantiate Lindsey's claims about them.

Lindsey's treatment of righteousness, *dikaioσύνη* (*dikaio synē*) in Greek and *תְּשׁוּבָה* (*tse-da-KAH*) in Hebrew, is particularly informative. He states that "the word 'righteousness' in the way Jesus uses it...is synonymous with 'redemption'" (pp. 43–44). For Lindsey, the highly Hebraic manner in which *dikaio synē* is employed in the synoptic Gospels is a strong indication of just how literally these texts were translated, and therefore how dependable and authentic they are.

The final chapters of the book deal with

Lindsey's favorite topic — the Kingdom of God. The first of these is about how Jesus speaks of the Kingdom: he either describes it as the supernatural penetration of the divine into our physical realm, or those people who are participating in God's redemptive movement. Lindsey argues that for Jesus the Kingdom of God was not a future phenomenon, but a present reality among his followers.

The following chapter discusses a redacted usage of the expression "Kingdom of God" which appears in the synoptic Gospels. This secondary usage equates the Kingdom with Jesus' return at the end of this age. Lindsey explains, "Failure to recognize that this is not an original way in which Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven has been at the root of the error of seeing the Kingdom as mainly future" (p. 91). Lindsey offers a fascinating survey of the passages pertinent to this subject.

In *The Jesus Sources* Lindsey deals with a number of topics not mentioned elsewhere in his works. He supports his arguments with copious examples from the Greek, presenting them in a clear and uncomplicated manner. For those already familiar with his research, fresh material is to be found, and for those who are not acquainted with Lindsey's views, *The Jesus Sources* would serve well as an introduction. JP

The *Jesus Sources* can be ordered from HaKeshet, 9939 S. 71st E. Ave., Tulsa, OK 74133, U.S.A., for \$6.95 (plus \$2.00 postage and handling for U.S. residents, \$4.50 for non-U.S. residents). Allow 7–10 weeks for delivery.

Joseph Frankovic teaches Biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek at Tulsa Junior College in Oklahoma, and is working on his doctorate at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York.

Other Available Titles by Robert Lindsey

In addition to the books reviewed in this issue, the following publications will be of interest to students of the synoptic Gospels. All three are available from Dugith Publishers, P.O. Box 154, 91000 Jerusalem, Israel. Prices include postage from Israel by surface mail. Allow 7–10 weeks for delivery.

A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of

Mark, 1973, 168 pp., \$12 (hardbound). Contains an eight-page foreword by Prof. Flusser, 98 pages of introduction in English by Lindsey in which he describes the insights he gained while translating Mark, and the Greek text and Lindsey's Hebrew translation of Mark.

A New Approach to the Synoptic Gospels, 1971, 23 pp., \$2.50. Lindsey sets

out twelve observations which distinguish his synoptic theory from the commonly accepted theory of Markan priority.

The Gospels, 1972, 18 pp., \$2.50. Lindsey characterizes each of the four Gospels, argues the advantage of having four, and denies the existence of an oral story before the canonical Gospels were written.

Transliteration Key

Hebrew & Aramaic

Syllables of transliterated words are separated by dots. Capitalization is used to indicate the accented syllable in words of more than one syllable. See p. 11 of the Nov/Dec 1989 issue for a full description of the transliteration system used in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

Consonants

א = ^h (silent)
ב = b
ג = g
ד = d
ה = h (or silent)
ו = v
ז = z
ח = h (voiceless guttural)
ט = t
י = y (or silent)

כ = k
ך = ^h (like ch in the Scottish *loch*)
ל = l
מ = m
נ = n
ס = s
ע = ^c (voiced guttural)
פ = p
ף = f
צ = ts
ץ = ^h (like ts in *nets*)
ק = k
ר = r
ש = sh
ט = s
ת = t
^aThe form of the letter at the end of a word.

Vowels

(The **š** is used here as a point of reference.)
א = a (like a in father; rarely like o in bone)

א = a (like a in father)
א = e (like e in net, or e in hey, or somewhere in between)
א = e (like e in net)
א = i (like i in ski)
א = o (like o in bone)
א = u (like u in flu)
א = e (silent, or as short as e in happening, or as long as e in net)

Diphthongs

א = ai
א = oi
א = ui

Greek

Transliterations are based on the Society of Biblical Literature system.

Pursuing Righteousness

(continued from page 12)

used with the noun expressing the object of the desire.

6. The preposition **עַל** (*al*, on, upon) would help to explain the Greek preposition *ἐνεκα* (*heneken*, because of).

7. Cf. Prov. 15:9: **וַיְהִי דֶּרֶךְ צָדִיק רָשָׁע יִסְדֵּף צָדִיק אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ יָשָׁר וְרָשָׁע יִסְדֵּף אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ יָשָׁר** (*to-a-VAT YHVH DE-rek ra-SHA' u-me-ra-DEF tse-da-KAH ye-e-HAV*, The way of a wicked man is an abomination to the LORD but He loves someone who pursues righteousness) and 21:21: **וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ יָשָׁר וְיִסְדֵּף אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ יָשָׁר** (*ro-DEF tse-da-KAH va-HA-sed yim-TSA' ha-YIM tse-da-KAH ve-ga-YOD*, Someone who pursues righteousness and grace will find life, righteousness and honor).

8. There is a rabbinic parallel to a passive suffering proverb as well: **לֵעֵלָם יֵאָדָם מִן הַדֹּרֶשִׁין וְלֹא מִן הַנִּדְרָשִׁין** (*le-o-LAM ye-HE' a-DAM min ha-nir-da-FIN ve-LO' min ha-rod-FIN*, A man should always be among the pursued/persecuted and not among the pursuers/persecutors) (Bava Kamma 93a [c. 500 A.D.]). Contrary to Lindsey's interpretation, this would give some support to the general applicability of the traditional view of the beatitude at Matthew 5:10.

9. In an unpublished manuscript on the life of Jesus.

10. This is indicated by *ἐνεκα* (*heneken*). Compare the same preposition in Mt. 5:11 with the meaning "because of."

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Lindsey's interpretation of Matthew 5:10, "blessed are those who pursue righteousness," is correct, or do you prefer the literal interpretation "blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness"? Can you support your position from Scripture?
2. If Lindsey's interpretation is correct, what did Jesus mean by "blessed are those who pursue righteousness"? What in your opinion is the object of that pursuit? How could one be the fulfillment of this beatitude?
3. What do you think of Lindsey's suggestion that Matthew 5:11-12 was spoken by Jesus after the resurrection and not in the same context as the Beatitudes? What, in your opinion, was the context for the Beatitudes? Send us your answers.
4. Read Luke 21:12-19 and compare with Matthew 10:16-22 noting the differences and similarities. Do you think that these are two different discourses of Jesus or different versions of the same discourse? How likely is it that this teaching or teachings was given in Jesus' post-resurrection period of teaching?
5. Do you think a translator would be justified in translating the final beatitude according to Lindsey's interpretation, or do you agree with Buth that even if Lindsey is right, his understanding should not be adopted by translators?
6. How can viewing Gospel accounts side-by-side give us a better understanding of Jesus' words?
7. How do inconsistent parallel accounts affect the validity of what is being reported? How do these affect your understanding of Scripture?

Glossary

codex — a manuscript whose sheets of papyrus or parchment are fastened together in the form of a book, rather than rolled into a scroll.

Codex Bezae — late fifth-early sixth-century Greek-Latin manuscript of the Gospels and Acts.

Double Tradition — pericopae shared only by Matthew and Luke, for instance, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.

Lukan doublet — a saying of Jesus appearing twice in the Gospel of Luke, apparently the result of Luke's copying from two sources each of which had a different version of the saying.

minor agreements — instances within the pericopae of the Triple Tradition where Matthew and Luke exhibit verbal agreement against Mark. Minor agreements usually consist in the addition of only a word or short phrase which is not found in Mark's parallel passage.

pericope (pa-rik'ā-pē) — an episode or story unit in the synoptic Gospels; a division of a synopsis. Plural: pericopae.

Q — a conjectured Greek work believed by some scholars to be the source of Matthew and Luke's non-Markan sayings.

synopsis — a book in which the first three Gospels are arranged in parallel columns.

synoptic Gospels — Matthew, Mark and Luke.

synoptic problem — the scholarly debate concerning the order in which the synoptic Gospels were written and the literary sources used by each.

synoptic — adjective from *συνόψισθαι* (*synopsēsthai*), a Greek word meaning "to view together or at the same time"; specifically refers to the first three Gospels of the New Testament.

Triple Tradition — pericopae shared by all three synoptic Gospels (for example, the baptism of Jesus, the stilling of the storm).

verbal identity — use of the same words, sometimes implying the same forms or sequence of words.

International Synoptic Society

The International Synoptic Society supports the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research by serving as a vehicle through which interested individuals can participate in the School's research.

The Society raises financial support for publication of the Jerusalem School's research, such as the *Jerusalem Synoptic Commentary*; facilitates informal discussion groups focusing on the synoptic Gospels; sponsors student research assistants and other volunteers who work with the Jerusalem School.

Annual membership in the Society is: Regular £60 or US\$100; Fellow £180 or \$300; Sponsor £300 or \$500; Patron £600 or \$1000; Lifetime membership £3000 or \$5000 and over. Membership dues can be paid in monthly or quarterly installments, and in most currencies (see box at bottom of page 2).

Members of the Society receive a beautiful certificate of membership and free subscription to JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. They also are entitled to unique privileges such as pre-publication releases of *Commentary* materials including preliminary Hebrew reconstructions with English translation of stories in the conjectured biography of Jesus. Major publications of the Jerusalem School will be inscribed with Society members' names.

Checks should be made payable to "Jerusalem School" and designated "ISS." Members in the United States can receive a tax-deductible receipt by sending their dues via the Jerusalem School's U.S. affiliates: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, P.O. Box 293040, Dayton, OH 45429; or Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, P.O. Box 5922, Pasadena, CA 91117.

Synoptic Discussion Groups

Individuals who are interested in the continuing research of the Jerusalem School may augment their studies by participating in a synoptic discussion group coordinated by the Society.

These groups meet regularly to exchange views on current research presented in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. In addition, a group may decide to learn Hebrew together, share study resources or pursue its own Gospel investigations.

Attendance is open to everyone. Since the discussion groups are not formally linked to the International Synoptic Society, membership in the Society is not a requirement for attending or leading a group.

This issue's Suggested Discussion Questions can be found on page 15.

The Jerusalem School

The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research (מכון ירושלים לחקר האוונגליזם הסינופטי) is a consortium of Jewish and Christian scholars who are examining the synoptic Gospels within the context of the language and culture in which Jesus lived. Their work confirms that Jesus was a Jewish sage who taught in Hebrew and used uniquely rabbinic teaching methods.

The Jerusalem School scholars believe the first narrative of Jesus' life was written in Hebrew, and that it can be successfully recovered from the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. The School's central objective is to retrieve the original biography of Jesus. This is an attempt to recover a lost document from the Second Temple period, a Hebrew scroll which, like so much Jewish

literature of the period, has been preserved only in Greek.

As a means to its objective, the Jerusalem School is creating a detailed commentary on the synoptic Gospels which will reflect the renewed insight provided by the School's research. Current research of Jerusalem School members and others is presented in the pages of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

The Jerusalem School was registered in Israel as a non-profit research institute in 1985. Its members are Prof. David Flusser, Dr. Robert L. Lindsey, Prof. Shmuel Safrai, David Bivin, Dr. Randall J. Buth, R. Steven Notley, Dwight A. Pryor, Halvor Ronning, Mirja Ronning, Dr. Chana Safrai and Dr. Bradford H. Young.

